

JMB cadres trained in 14 dens in Tangail, Sherpur

Arrested militants tell police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) Ehsar members Arifur Rahman Hasib alias Akash and Jahurul Islam alias Zahir have confessed to their involvement in bomb blasts in Gazipur on November 29 and on August 17 respectively.

They gave confessional statements before First Class Magistrate Hasanul Matin in Tangail under Section 164 on Wednesday.

In Sherpur, JMB district commander Mujahidul Islam Sumon was placed on three days' fresh remand when he was produce before court on Thursday on expiry of his 10-day remand.

Akash of Chackpara village in Sreepur upazila in Mirzapur district was arrested in Chittagong.

He was shown arrested in Tangail after police, acting on his confession, on February 1 arrested Zahir and JMB cadres Shahadat Hossen alias Imran from Namasola village in Kaliakair upazila in Gazipur district and Mahmudur Rahman alias Russel from Asgana village in Mirzapur upazila in Tangail and recovered two grenades along with four detonators and 33 lead splinters from a bush near Russel's house.

On the same day, SI Tapash Chandra Pandit of Mirzapur police station in Tangail and SI Shakil Ahmed of Gazipur Sadar police filed two cases accusing the five militants.

Akash admitted that he took part in bomb blasts at Gazipur Bar



PHOTO: STAR

JMB cadres (from left) Zahir, Imran and Russel now in custody who gave confessional statements.

Association office on November 29.

Jahir confessed to his involvement in the August 17 serial bomb blasts at Gazipur road-intersection last year.

Jahir told the court that he was recruited by Gazipur JMB commander Nizam Uddin Reza and became an Ehsar member of JMB within few days. Reza is also a charge sheeted accused in Gazipur bomb blast case.

Earlier, Imran and Russel in confessions before a magistrate court under Section 164 said they got bombs from Reza and blasted those in Gazipur on August 17. Reza is yet to be arrested. Police said they are hunting for Reza hailing from Mollarhat upazila in Bagerhat district.

Imran and Russel said they were students of Kaliakair Senior Fazil Madrasa.

Quoting the arrested JMB cadres, sources in Gazipur and Tangail police said militants were trained in 14 dens in Tangail and Gazipur districts.

These were in Asgana, Kanchanpur, Taktarchala, Kalian, Namasola, Ashulia, Bhati Khalpar, Media, Solai, Rashidpur, Mazidpur, and Telina villages in Mirzapur and Sakhipur upazilas in Tangail district and Kaliakair upazila in Gazipur.

They said JMB leader Enayetullah alias Jwel, arrested from Joydevpur with a huge quantity of bomb making materials few months back, had recruited a large number of militants from the areas,

staying at a rented house at Balla in Kaihati upazila in Tangail district. Jwel hailed from Kotalipara upazila in Gopalganj district.

In Sherpur, arrested Sumon told interrogators that he was an aide to JMB kingpin Abdur Rahman. He was arrested from Gourdar village in Nokla upazila in Tangail on March 12.

Police said they got important information from Sumon but declined to give details for the shake of investigation.

On August 17, six bombs were exploded at five points in Sherpur town including the office premises of the Deputy Commissioner and the District Judge. Police recovered an unexploded bomb.

Boy beaten dead for Tk 70

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

A teenage boy was beaten to death allegedly by his employer for stealing Tk 70 from his shop at Boshukhali village in Shyamnagar upazila Thursday night.

The victim, Rezaul Islam, 15, son of Mazid Gazi was working at a grocery of Abdul Alim for the last two years, police said.

He was beaten by Abdul Alim, Abu Daud and Akbar Ali in the morning on suspicion of stealing Tk 70 from the shop.

He was shifted to Assasuni Health Complex in a critical condition where he died at night.

On contact, Shyamnagar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Zahid Hossain confirmed the incident. The victim's father filed a case against two persons, he said.

Sabotage suspected in Khulna Janata Bank fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

All documents of four departments of the Janata Bank (JB) corporate branch here were gutted on Wednesday.

All documents of the departments of Foreign Exchange, Advance, Accounts and Computer were damaged totally, according to JB Deputy General Manager (DGM) Amol Kumar Dey.

'It is a sabotage to damage documents relating to money laundering where some officials of the branch were involved,' said a reliable source of the bank.

However, JB General Manager Shihabuddin Mohammad Shahahan and its Area Manager Khairul Islam refused to comment before a probe into the incident.

According to eye-witnesses, two unidentified men were seen running down the second floor of the bank at the time of the incident. The store-room was under lock and key but one of its windows was open, they said.

A four-member committee headed by Md Moniruzzaman, Assistant General Manager (AGM) of the bank's divisional office was formed to investigate into the cause of fire. The committee members are Md Wadud Hossain, Abdur Rashid Akand and Khandker Abul Kalam, all senior principal officers (SPOs). The committee is likely to submit report on Monday.

Four held with slaughtered deer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Forest officials arrested four deer hunters with a gun and ammunition and recovered a slaughtered deer from their possession on a boat on Arpanghashia river in the Sundarbans.

The arrested persons are Shahbaz Sardar Kashem and Dildar Gazi of Choromukh village; and Majibar Rahman and Nuruzzaman of Golkhali village in Koira upazila in Khulna.

Acting on a tip-off, forest guards led by Kobadak Forest Station-in-Charge Abu Saleh and Assistant Forest Officer Abdur Rashid chased the boat and caught them, according to police and forest official.

Abdur Rashid filed two cases with Shyamnagar thana against the, one under Forest Conservation Act of 1927 and other under Arms Act.

On contact, Abu Saleh confirmed the incident.

Potato yield lowest in 5 years



PHOTO: STAR

Women sorting out rotten potato on the premises of a cold storage in Nilphamari.

30pc space in cold storages to remain empty in N-dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Potato production in Nilphamari this year would be around half of last year's quantity and at least 30 per cent space in cold storages will remain empty, sources said.

The production has been the lowest in five years due to massive attack by 'late blight' disease in plants, Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials said. The situation is the same in all the eight districts in greater Rangpur and Dinajpur, they said.

The slump in production has already hit markets. The wholesale price is Tk 700- 800 per 84 kg bag against last year's Tk 350-300. In the retail market, potato is sold at around Tk 10 per kg against Tk 4-5 last year. The prices will soar further, traders and cold storage owners said.

The cold storage are also facing

potato crisis. Immature potatoes collected from lands are rotting.

Farmers cultivated potato on 16,495 hectares of land in Nilphamari, which is 1,475 hectares more than that of last year.

Immediately after sowing, farmers faced a severe blow when it rained heavily in the later half of October. Farmers in most areas in Nilphamari prepared lands again and sowed seeds. But when plants matured, it was late. Most potato fields were attacked with 'late blight' a wild virus that destroys plants in three-four days.

AED Plant protection specialist Ahamed Reza in Nilphamari said as plants turn yellowish and die within 3-4 days, most potatoes under the ground remain immature. After collection, immature potatoes start rotting with fifteen days and cannot be preserved.

AED officials said last year's production of potato was around 14 tonnes per hectare, which came down to around seven tonnes this year.

Managing Director of Mukta Cold Storage in Jaldhaka, Sayed Ali, said at least 30 per cent of his cold storage will remain empty this year as farmers and traders are not giving reservation orders.

He said immature potatoes collected from lands would rot in cold storage within a short time.

Sylhet int'l trade fair uncertain

Students oppose use of MC college, ministry orders probe into alleged irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Holding of the International Trade Fair in Sylhet by Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) at MC College ground has become uncertain.

The ministry of commerce in a letter sent to Sylhet Deputy Commissioner has asked the administration to probe the allegation of corruption by fair organisers in selecting the 'event management firm'. The letter reached the DC office on Wednesday.

On getting a complaint from Bangladesh Moslin and Jamdani Foundation, the ministry asked the Deputy Commissioner to stop the fair and look into the irregularities and corruption in selecting the firm. The DC has been asked to send the probe report within seven days, official sources said.

The Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) had earlier announced that the fair would open on March 23. To organise the fair, it had selected an 'event management firm' from Chittagong.

Accordingly, work began at the MC College ground, which sparked commotion among students as HSC annual examinations are nearing.

As the students protested, the college principal also withdrew the permission for holding the fair two weeks ago and asked SCCL to stop preparing the field for the fair.

Students in banners of different

organisations and forums held rallies and handed over memorandums to the principal for stopping the fair.

Meanwhile, seeing students' commotion, the administration also showed a lukewarm response to the SCCL initiative.

A meeting of the fair advisory committee held last week with Divisional Commissioner in the chair could not take any decision about holding the fair on the MC College ground.

However, SCCL President Faruque Ahmed Misbah told The Daily Star yesterday that he did not get any letter from any quarter to stop preparations for the fair.

"I saw the news (about the fair) in some local newspapers. The ministry has just asked the DC to make an inquiry. We will try to make our position clear if there is any inquiry", he said.

"We talked to students and the principal and hope things will be alright soon", Misbah claimed.

He alleged that some vested quarters were provoking students not to allow the fair on the college.

"We hope to start the fair in the first or second week of April", Misbah added.

However, some student leaders told this correspondent that they would not allow the fair on the college ground.



PHOTO: STAR

Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, convener of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Port, addressing a rally at Temple Road in Bogra town yesterday, organised by it to protest proposed open pit mining in Fulbari coal mine in Dinajpur.

8x3

15x3